1. (Amended) A method of [entering] <u>processing</u> bid information for an electronic auction comprising the steps of:

    (a) [reviewing] <u>providing</u> a database of items available for auction;

    (b) [entering] <u>receiving</u> a set of bids <u>from one or more bidders</u> for a corresponding set of items selected from said database, each bid in said set of bids including at least a bid price and a bid ranking <u>specified by a bidder</u> for an item;

    wherein said bid ranking <u>from said bidder</u> for an item represents a desired order in which a bid is to be resolved in the electronic auction <u>compared to any other bids made by such bidder for other items in said database of items;</u>

        <u>further wherein said bidder can specify that a set of ranked bids submitted by such bidder for a set of items should be treated as mutually exclusive.</u>

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a set of bids from any particular bidder each include a unique bid ranking for each of said corresponding set of items.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including a step (c): providing a maximum bid price for each bid, and an auto-bid indicator for raising said bid price as needed until said maximum bid price is reached.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including a step (c): monitoring a status of the electronic auction, including a high bid for an item, and information relating to other conditional bids for said item.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including a step (c): selecting a guaranteed purchase option for an item so that said item is purchased without undergoing further processing in the electronic auction.

6. (Amended) A method of monitoring bid information for an electronic auction comprising the steps of:

    (a) retrieving a set of items from an auction database in accordance with a specified search criteria;

    (b) displaying said set of items;

    (c) for each item in said set of items, displaying a current highest unconditional bid price specified by a bidder and information relating to any conditional bids specified by other bidders for said item;

        wherein said conditional bids are not considered by an auction processing engine until and unless they become unconditional bids during an auction period associated with said item.
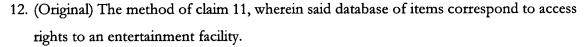
7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said set of items correspond to inventory to be auctioned during a common auction period.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said information relating to said conditional bids includes a numerical value indicating a number of said conditional bids having a bid price equal to or exceeding said highest unconditional bid price and/or a minimum bid price for said item.

9. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said items correspond to access rights to an entertainment facility.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said entertainment facility is a golf course, and said items are golf tee times at said golf course.

11. (Amended) A method of [participating] permitting bidders to participate in an electronic auction comprising the steps of:

    (a) reviewing a database of items available for auction;

    (b) entering a set of bids for a corresponding set of items selected from said database, each bid in said set of bids including at least a bid price and a bid ranking specified by a bidder for an item;

wherein said bid ranking from said bidder for an item represents a desired order in which a bid is to be resolved in the electronic auction compared to any other bids made by such bidder for other items in said database of items;

    (c) processing said set of bids based on both said bid price and said bid ranking for said corresponding set of items to determine if there is at least one winning bid for one of said corresponding set of items;

and wherein a bidder can specify that a set of ranked bids submitted by such bidder for a set of items should be processed as mutually exclusive.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein said database of items correspond to access rights to an entertainment facility.

13. (Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein said corresponding set of items are selected by a user based on selecting items from said database that are to be processed during a predefined auction period, and such that each item can have a unique auction period.

14. (Amended) The method of claim 11, where said processing step (c) determines how said corresponding set of items should be auctioned based on first considering a highest ranking bid submitted by a bidder, and if said highest ranking bid is not satisfied, said processing step selects a next highest ranking bid provided by said bidder.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein during step (b), said set of bids includes at least one unconditional bid for a highest ranked item taken from said corresponding set of items, and the remainder of said set of bids being comprised of conditional bids for items ranked below said highest ranked item.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said conditional bids are not considered during step (c) unless said unconditional bid is unsuccessful for said highest ranked item.

17. (Original) The method of claim 11, further including a step (d): notifying a bidder when a highest ranked bid is unsuccessful for a corresponding item.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, further including a step (e): permitting said bidder to increase a bid price for said highest ranked bid and then repeating step (c).

19. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein when one bid from set of bids is satisfied for a bidder, any remaining bids are not evaluated for said bidder.

20. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein multiple sets of bids are entered by multiple participants in the auction, and said multiple sets of bids are subjected to the processing step (c) to determine a single winning bid for each of said corresponding set of items.

21. (Original) The method of claim 11, further including a step (d): allowing participants to monitor a status of the electronic auction by displaying bid price and bid ranking information for each of said set of items.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein said bid ranking information is limited to an identification of a number of conditional bids placed for each of said set of items, and which conditional bids have a bid price equal to or exceeding a highest unconditional bid price for such items.

23. (Amended) A method of participating in an electronic auction comprising the steps of:

    (a) selecting a set of N items from a database of items available for auction, said set of N items being characterized by a common auction expiration period;

    (b) entering a set of N bids for said set of N items <u>from a bidder</u>, such that said set of N bids includes at least one unconditional bid <u>from said bidder</u> for one item in said set of N items, and the remainder of said set of N bids being comprised of conditional bids <u>from said bidder</u> for a remainder of said N items;

    (c) processing said set of bids prior to said common auction expiration period to determine if there is at least one winning bid in said set of bids, said processing being performed such that said conditional bids <u>from said bidder</u> are not considered unless said unconditional bid <u>from said bidder</u> for said one item is unsuccessful, and such that at most only a single item from said set of N items is matched <u>for said bidder</u> to a single one of said set of N bids <u>from said bidder</u> when determining said at least one winning bid;

    <u>wherein a set of bids on a set of mutually exclusive items from said bidder are processed until one bid of said set of bids is satisfied</u>.

24. (Amended) The method of claim 23, further wherein during step (b) said N bids are ranked <u>by said bidder</u> in accordance with a desired auction resolution order.

25. (Original) The method of claim 23, where said processing step (c) determines how said corresponding set of items should be auctioned based on first considering a highest ranking bid submitted.

26. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein during step (b), said set of bids includes at least one unconditional bid for a highest ranked item taken from said corresponding set of items, and the remainder of said set of bids being comprised of conditional bids for items ranked below said highest ranked item.

27. (Amended) A method of participating in an electronic auction comprising the steps of:

    (a) entering a first bid <u>from a bidder</u> for a first auction item that is to be auctioned during a first auction expiration period; and

    (b) entering a second bid <u>from said bidder</u>, prior to expiration of said first auction expiration period, for a second auction item that is to be to be auctioned during a second auction expiration period;

    (c) processing said first bid <u>from said bidder</u> prior to said first auction expiration period to determine if it is a winning bid for said first auction item; and

        1) discarding said second bid <u>from said bidder</u> when said first bid is a winning bid; and

        2) when said first bid <u>from said bidder</u> is not a winning bid, said second bid <u>from said bidder</u> is processed prior to said second auction expiration period to determine if it is a winning bid for <u>said</u> second auction item.

28. (Amended) The method of claim 27, wherein said first bid is treated an unconditional bid, and said second bid is treated as a conditional bid <u>and is not processed as an actual bid for said second auction item</u> until said first bid is determined to be unsuccessful.

29. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein at most only one of said first bid and second bid are declared as a winning bid.

30. (Amended) A method of allowing a purchaser to bid on a right of access to one or more facilities, each of which facilities has a finite capacity for accommodating purchasers at a particular time, said method comprising the steps of:

    (a) retrieving access items related to the one or more facilities, said access items each corresponding to an access time available at the one or more facilities;

    (b) selecting a set of access items from said access items, said set of access items being based on a selected access time and selected facility chosen by the purchaser;

    (c) entering a set of bids for said set of access items, such that each bid from a purchaser in said set of bids includes both a bid price and a bid ranking from the purchaser for an access item;

    wherein the purchaser can control through said bid ranking in what order said set of bids are considered to determine whether they are winning bids for any of said access items;

    wherein the purchaser can submit a set of bids on a set of mutually exclusive access items at once and have said set of bids considered so as to yield only one successful bid.

31. (Amended) The method of claim 30, wherein said set of bids further includes personal information concerning the purchaser, and said personal information is compared against that of other purchasers to determine a final access time awarded to the purchaser for said access items that best satisfies a capacity availability at said selected facility.

32. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein said access items are auctioned across different auction expiration periods.

33. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein after any bid from the purchaser is determined to be a winning bid, any remaining bids from the purchaser are disregarded.

34. (Amended) A method of allowing a purchaser to bid on a right to play golf at a selected time and at a selected golf facility in an electronic auction, comprising the steps of:

   (a) presenting a list of available golf playing opportunities to the purchaser, said golf playing opportunities including information identifying a golf course, a golf course date, and a golf course time at said golf course available for playing golf;

   (b) allowing the purchaser to select one or more golf playing opportunities desired by the purchaser, said golf playing opportunities being characterized by a common expiration period within the electronic auction;

   (c) allowing the purchaser to enter a bid for each of said one or more golf playing opportunities, said bid including both a bid price and a bid ranking specified by the purchaser for each of said one or more golf playing opportunities, so that a set of mutually exclusive purchaser bids are created for said one or more golf playing opportunities;

   (d) processing said set of mutually exclusive purchaser bids, along with third party bids for said one or more golf playing opportunities, to determine winning bids for said golf playing opportunities;

   (e) notifying the purchaser when a currently highest ranked bid from said purchaser is determined to be a winning bid or when said currently highest ranked bid is determined to be not a winning bid;

   (f) allowing the purchaser to increase said bid price for said highest ranked bid within a predetermined time period when said highest ranked bid is determined to be not a winning bid;

   (g) repeating steps (d) to (f) as needed until the end of the common expiration period, and until all of said purchaser bids are determined to be not winning bids, or until one of said purchaser bids is determined to be a winning bid;

   wherein the purchaser is permitted to bid on multiple golf playing opportunities using said set of mutually exclusive purchaser bids, but at most only a single one of said set of mutually exclusive purchaser bids is satisfied as a winning bid.

35. (Original) The method of claim 34, wherein said time at said golf course in (a) is not a single specific time but rather a window of time which includes multiple potential starting times.

36. (Original) The method of claim 35, wherein said multiple potential starting times are assigned to said purchasers that have been declared winning bidders with said multiple times assigned so as to increase the pace of play on the golf course and to improve the enjoyment of said purchasers because of said faster pace of play and because the said purchasers can be grouped according to playing ability so players will be assigned to play with other purchasers of similar capability.

37. (Amended) A method of conducting an electronic auction comprising the steps of:
   (a) compiling a database of items available for auction;
   (b) grouping said items based on a common auction period to create a set of common items available to a plurality of purchasers for bidding;
   (c) receiving bids for said set of common items from said plurality of purchasers, said bids including at least a bid price and a bid ranking specified by a purchaser for an item, said bids being comprised of separate sets of mutually exclusive bids from each of said plurality of purchasers for separate and mutually exclusive items;
   (d) processing said separate sets of mutually exclusive bids based on both said bid price and said bid ranking specified by said purchaser for said set of common items to determine winning bids for each item in said set of common items.

38. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein each of said plurality of users receives at most one winning bid for said set of common items.

39. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein a winning bid for an item in said set of common items is determined by comparing bids submitted by purchasers in an order determined by said bid ranking submitted by said purchasers for said item.

40. (Amended) The method of claim 37, wherein said electronic auction for an item proceeds in a sequence determined by examining highest ranked bids in said separate sets of bids submitted for said item <u>by purchasers</u>, and not by reference to a highest bid price offered for said item.

41. (Original) The method of claim 37, further including the following steps: (e): notifying a first purchaser when a highest ranked bid from said first purchaser is determined to be not a winning bid for an item; (f) permitting said first purchaser to increase an amount of said bid price for said item within a predetermined time period; (g) notifying a second purchaser that their highest ranked bid is a winning bid when said first purchaser does not increase their bid price within said predetermined price period.

42. (Amended) The method of claim 37, wherein said winning bids can be determined even before an end of said common auction period <u>by giving purchasers an immediate purchase option</u>.

43. (Amended) The method of claim 37, wherein said bid prices for said separate sets of <u>mutually exclusive</u> bids for said set of common items, but not said bid rankings, are visible to said plurality of purchasers during said common auction period.

44. (Amended) A method of conducting an electronic auction of a group of items within a predetermined auction time period, comprising the steps of:

    (a) receiving a plurality of bids from a plurality of potential purchasers, said plurality of bids each including a bid price for an item in the group and a bid ranking <u>specified by a purchaser</u> for said item;

    (b) examining said bids to create a set of active bids for said item, said set of active bids being comprised only of bids having a highest bid ranking <u>specified by a purchaser</u> for said item and corresponding to a subset of said plurality of bids from a subset of said plurality of potential purchasers;

    (c) creating an ordered set of active bids for said item based on a bid price provided for said bid;

    (d) determining a minimum winning bid for said item by examining said ordered set of active bids;

    (e) notifying a corresponding one potential purchaser from said subset of potential purchasers when an associated active bid for said item from said potential purchaser has an associated active bid price below said minimum winning bid;

    (f) setting a selected active bid in said ordered set of active bids as a winning bid for said item when said selected active bid exceeds said minimum winning bid;

    <u>wherein a potential purchaser can specify that any bids be treated as mutually exclusive so that only one of said bids is satisfied for said potential purchaser</u>.

45. (Original) The method of claim 44, further including a step: (e)': dropping said associated active bid from consideration when said one potential purchaser does not increase said associated active bid price within a predetermined time period.

46. (Amended) The method of claim 44, further including a step (g): selecting a next highest ranking bid <u>specified by a potential purchaser</u> as an active bid for a different item in the group for those potential purchasers not obtaining said winning bid for said item.

47. (Original) The method of claim 44, wherein during step (d), a minimum price set by a seller of said item is considered to determine whether a minimum winning bid exists.

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48. (Original) The method of claim 44, wherein during step (f), a potential purchaser is notified of said winning bid prior to an expiration of the predetermined auction period if no other active bids exist for said item.

49. (Original) The method of claim 44, wherein during step (b), a set of active bids is created for each of the items in the group, so that all of the items in the group are auctioned substantially simultaneously.

50. (Amended) The method of claim 44, wherein the electronic auction is conducted such that a potential purchaser can provide a bid for more than one item, and for items having different auction expiration periods, but only receives a single winning bid at most for items having different auction expiration periods.

51.   (Amended) A method of conducting an electronic auction for an item comprising the steps of:

    (a) receiving a plurality of bids from a plurality of potential purchasers for the item, said plurality of bids each including a bid price and a bid ranking specified by the purchasers for the item;

    (b) sorting said plurality of bids to form a set of active bids for the item, said set of active bids for the item including only those bids [corresponding to] in which a potential purchaser designated said bid for said item with a highest bid ranking among all bids submitted by said potential purchaser [made by each of said plurality of potential purchasers];

    (c) determining a winning bid for said item by referring only to said set of active bids associated with said item.

52. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein during step (c), the winning bid is not necessarily determined by reference to which of said plurality of bids has a highest bid price for a respective one of the group of items.

53. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein any bids from a potential purchaser include at least one unconditional bid for at least one item, and any other bids from said potential purchasers for other items are conditional bids.

54. (Amended) The method of claim 51, wherein each potential purchaser must provide a bid and bid ranking for each item in the group of items.

55. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein at most only one bid from said potential purchaser is matched with an item, regardless of a number of bids provided by said potential purchaser for items in the group.

56. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein each of said plurality of potential purchasers can submit more than one bid, but can receive at most only one winning bid for a single item from the group of items.

57.   (Amended) A method of conducting an electronic auction for an item comprising the steps of:

(a)   identifying a set of highest ranked bids from bids made by bidders for the item;

wherein a highest ranked bid corresponds to a bid specified by a bidder as a highest ranked bid compared to bid rankings specified by a bidder for other bids made by said bidder;

(b)   designating said set of highest ranked bids as active bids for said bidders;

(c)   determining whether any of said active bids are a potential winning bid for the item by comparing said active bids against each other and any previously determined winning bid;

(d)   designating any active bid that is a potential winning bid as a winning bid;

(e)   deleting any active bids that are not designated as a winning bid;

(f)   repeating steps (c) to (e) during an auction period until no active bids remaining that are higher than said winning bid.

58. (Original) The method of claim 57, further including a step (d)': notifying a bidder if an active bid for said bidder is not a preliminary winning bid, and specifying a re-bid period for said bidder to increase said active bid.

59. (Original) The method of claim 58, further including a step (e)': receiving a new active bid from a bidder during said re-bid period, which new active bid has a higher bid price than an earlier active bid from said bidder.

60. (Original) The method of claim 58, further including a step (g): designating a next highest ranked bid from said bidder as an active bid for another item when said bidder does not increase said active bid during said re-bid period.

61. (Original) The method of claim 57, wherein during step (b), any active bids for an item are designated without regard to a bid price of said bids.

62. (Original) The method of claim 57, wherein a plurality of items, each with a set of corresponding active bids, is processed at the same time to determine a plurality of winning bids.

63. (Original) The method of claim 57, wherein said winning bid is a highest bid price taken from said active bids, not a highest bid price taken from all bids on said item.

64. (Amended) The method of claim 57, wherein each bidder can submit a plurality of bids and associated bid rankings for a plurality of items, but at most only one of said bids is declared a winning bid.

65. (Amended) A method of conducting an auction comprising the steps of:

    a. receiving a listing of a plurality of mutually exclusive items from a plurality of sellers;

    b. receiving a plurality of ranked bids from a plurality of users on said plurality of mutually exclusive items;

        wherein each user submits a plurality of mutually exclusive bids so that such user is given an option of only securing one of such mutually exclusive items;

    c. identifying a plurality of highest ranked bids, said highest ranked bids being specified by [for] each of said plurality of users for one of their bids in their plurality of mutually exclusive bids;

    d. tagging said plurality of highest ranked bids as active bids;

    e. using only said active bids to determine a plurality of preliminary winning bids for said plurality of mutually exclusive items;

    f. tagging said plurality of preliminary winning bids;

    g. eliminating all non-winning bids;

    h. identifying a plurality of next highest ranked bids as specified by said plurality of users for each of said plurality of users not obtaining a winning bid;

    i. designating said plurality of next highest ranked bids as active bids;

    j. comparing only said active bids and said winning bids;

    k. identifying a new preliminary winning bid for each of the plurality of mutually exclusive items and tagging said new preliminary winning bid;

    l. processing said plurality of ranked bids during a bidding period until all of said plurality of users have either a winning bid or no remaining active bids;

    m. transmitting the results of the auction to said plurality of users.

66. (Original) The method of claim 65, wherein said ranked bid is made to purchase a mutually exclusive item usable by a group of two or more individuals.

67. (Original) The method of claim 65, wherein said plurality of ranked bids are unconditional bids.

68. (Original) The method of claim 65, wherein new ranked bids may be submitted any time before an end of said bidding period.

69. (Original) The method of claim 65, wherein a notice is conveyed to a user if an associated user current active bid is designated a non-winning bid, said notice giving a prescribed time frame to increase said non-winning bid.

70. (Original) The method of claim 69, wherein said non-winning bid is declared a non-active bid if said user does not increase said bid during the prescribed time frame.

71. (Amended) A method of conducting an electronic auction for access rights to a facility comprising the steps of:

(a) dividing a capacity of the facility into a set of access time windows;

(b) creating a set of access right items based on said set of access time windows, said access right items including at least an access starting time and access duration associated with performing an activity at the facility;

(c) receiving bids for said access right items, each of said bids including a bid price and a bid ranking specified by a bidder;

(d) processing said bids based on both said bid price and bid ranking to determine whether any successful bids exist for any of said access right items;

wherein all of said access right items are auctioned at the same time; and

further wherein said bidder can submit a set of bids on a set of access right items at once and have said set of bids considered in the electronic auction so as to obtain only one access right item, regardless of a [the] number of bids submitted by said bidder.

72. (Original) The method of claim 71 wherein said access right items further include a capacity value specifying a number of persons that can perform said activity at the facility during said access time window.

73. (Original) The method of claim 71 wherein said access right items further include an access time spacing, such that a plurality of access right items can be associated with an access time window, and said plurality of access right items are separated in time by said access time spacing.

74. (Original) The method of claim 71 further including a step of defining a minimum bid price for said set of access right items.

75. (Original) The method of claim 71 further including a step of defining a guaranteed bid price for said set of access right items, which guaranteed bid price specifies a bid price that will result in a an automatic successful bid.

76.   (Amended) A system for conducting an electronic auction of items comprising:

(a)   an auction controller accessible by a number of bidding computing systems;

(b)   an auction inventory database accessible by said auction controller, and being adapted to store identifying information for the items; and

(c)   an auction bid database accessible by said auction controller, and being adapted to store information for bids on the items, each of said bids including both a bid price and a bid ranking specified by a bidder for an item, said bid ranking corresponding to a desired order in which a bid is to be resolved compared to any other bids made by such bidder for other items in said database of items;

said auction controller being configured such that it processes said bids for said items in accordance with both said bid price and said bid ranking specified by a bidder for said items and such that said bidder's ranked bids for any of the items can be treated as mutually exclusive.

77. (Original) The system of claim 76, further including an e-mail processor for notifying bidders of results of the electronic auction.

78. (Original) The system of claim 76, further including an administrative computing device for performing administrative tasks for said auction controller.

79. (Original) The system of claim 76, wherein said bidding computing systems are connected through a network to said auction controller.

80. (Original) The system of claim 76, wherein all of the items are auctioned at the same time.

81. (Amended) A system for conducting an electronic auction of items comprising:

(a) an electronic auction file for storing information concerning auction items;

(b) an electronic bid file for storing a set of bids for a corresponding set of items selected from said auction file, each bid in said set of bids including at least a bid price and a bid ranking specified by a bidder for an item;

(c) an electronic auction processor for processing said set of bids based on both said bid price and said bid ranking specified by bidders for said corresponding set of items to determine if there is at least one winning bid for one of said corresponding set of items; and

wherein a single bidder [user of the system] can bid on more than one item in the electronic auction, but said electronic auction processor [will] can be programmed to only generate at most a single winning bid for said single bidder [user].

82. (Amended) A system for participating in an electronic auction comprising:

(a) a set of N items stored in a database of items available for auction, said set of N items being characterized by a common auction expiration period;

(b) a bid input interface for entering a set of N bids from a single bidder for said set of N items, said bid input interface constraining said set of N bids such that at least [one] one unconditional bid is provided by said single bidder for one item in said set of N items, and the remainder of said set of N bids are comprised of conditional bids for a remainder of said N items;

(c) an auction processor coupled to said database of items and said bid input interface, and being further adapted to process said set of bids prior to said common auction expiration period to determine if there is at least one winning bid in said set of bids, said processing being performed such that said conditional bids are not considered unless said unconditional bid for said one item is unsuccessful, and such that at said single bidder's request at most only a single item from said set of N items is matched to a single one of said set of N bids submitted by said single bidder when determining said at least one winning bid.

83. (Amended) A system for participating in an electronic auction comprising:

(a) a database of auction items, said auction items including first auction items available for bidding during a first auction period, and second auction items available for bidding during a second bidding period;

(b) a bid input device for transmitting a first bid for one of said first auction items and a second bid for one of said second auction items, said first and second bids being received from a single bidder prior to an expiration of said first auction period;

(c) an auction processor coupled to said database of auction items and said bid input device, and being further adapted to determine if said first bid is a winning bid prior to said expiration of said first auction period; and being further configured to process said second bid when said first bid is finally determined to be not a winning bid;

wherein said single bidder can specify that said first bid and said second bids be treated as mutually exclusive.

84. (Amended) A system for allowing a purchaser to bid on a right to play golf at a selected time and at a selected golf facility in an electronic auction, said system comprising:

    (a)   a query interface for presenting a list of available golf playing opportunities to the purchaser, said golf playing opportunities including information identifying both a golf course and a time at said golf course available for playing golf;

    (b)   a bid interface adapted to allow the purchaser to enter a bid for each of said one or more golf playing opportunities, said bid including both a bid price and a bid ranking specified by the purchaser for each of said one or more golf playing opportunities, so that a set of mutually exclusive purchaser bids are created for said one or more golf playing opportunities;

    (c)   an auction processor for processing said set of mutually exclusive purchaser bids, along with third party bids for said one or more golf playing opportunities, to determine winning bids for said golf playing opportunities;

    (d)   an e-mail notification system for notifying the purchaser when a currently highest ranked bid from said purchaser is determined to be a winning bid or when said currently highest ranked bid is determined to be not a winning bid;

said auction processor being further configured:

    1)   to allow the purchaser to increase said bid price for said highest ranked bid within a predetermined time period when said highest ranked bid is determined to be not a winning bid;

    2)   to evaluate new bids until the end of the common expiration period, and until all of said purchaser bids are determined to be not winning bids, or until one of said purchaser bids is determined to be a winning bid;

wherein [the] a single purchaser is permitted to bid on multiple golf playing opportunities using said set of mutually exclusive purchaser bids, but at most only a single one of said set of mutually exclusive purchaser bids is satisfied as a winning bid.

85. (Amended) An electronic auction program for processing auction bids for an item comprising:

(a) a first program portion for identifying a set of highest ranked bids from bids made by bidders for the item, and for designating said set of highest ranked bids as active bids for said bidders;

wherein a highest ranked bid from a bidder corresponds to a bid specified by the bidder as a highest ranked item compared to rankings for other items which bidder is bidding on;

(b) a second program portion for determining whether any of said active bids are a potential winning bid for the item by comparing said active bids against each other and any previously determined winning bid;

(c) a third program portion for designating any active bid that is a potential winning bid as a winning bid;

(d) a fourth program portion for deleting any active bids that are not designated as a winning bid;

(e) a fifth program portion for coordinating said first program portion, said second program portion, said third program portion and said fourth program portion during an auction period until no active bids remain that are higher than said winning bid;

wherein only bidders for which the item is a highest ranked bid are considered for potential winning bids on the item.

86. (Original) The electronic auction program of claim 85, wherein the electronic auction program executes from a computing system accessible by a plurality of user computing devices adapted to enter said bids.

87. (Original) The electronic auction program of claim 85, wherein the computing system is a server accessible on the internet, and said user computing devices include web browsers for interacting with web pages on said server for entering said bids.

88. (Amended) A web based auction system interface configured for [peforming] performing I/O operations between a bidder and an auction system through a browser, said web based interface comprising:

an auction query interface that is adapted for viewing auction items and receiving user queries through the browser concerning said auction items, and further for retrieving one or more of said auction items in response to such user queries; and

an auction bid entry interface that is adapted for receiving user bids for said auction items, said auction bid entry interface including both a bid price entry field and a bid ranking field for permitting a user to specify a ranking for any auction item that receives a user bid;

further wherein said auction bid entry interface can be used to specify that a set of bids submitted by such bidder for a corresponding set of different items should be treated as mutually exclusive.

89. (Original) The web based auction system interface of claim 88, further including an auction status interface for monitoring progress of an auction for said auction items during an auction period.

90. (Amended) The web based auction system interface of claim 89, wherein [said auction bid entry interface allows a user to enter a plurality of bids on a plurality of auction items, with each of said plurality of auction items receiving] each bid in said set of bids is specified by such bidder with a different ranking [from any other of said plurality of auction items].

91. (Original) The web based auction system interface of claim 88, wherein said auction bid entry interface allows a user to enter bids which carry over from a first auction to a second auction when said bids are not successful during said first auction.

92. (Amended) An internet accessible electronic auction site configured for coordinating transactions between a bidder and an auction system, said internet accessible electronic auction site comprising:

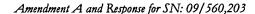   means for accessing auction items available for bidding;

    an auction query interface adapted for viewing within a web browser and configured for receiving user queries through said browser concerning said auction items, and for retrieving one or more of said auction items in response to such user queries; and

    an auction bidding interface adapted for viewing within said web browser and configured for receiving user bid entries through said browser concerning said one or more auction items, said auction bidding interface including at least a first field for receiving a bid amount and a second field for receiving a bid ranking for permitting a user to specify a ranking for each user bid entry; and

    an auction controller for processing said user bid entries to determine winning bids for said one or more auction items;

    wherein a user can specify that a set of ranked bids submitted by such bidder for a set of items should be processed as mutually exclusive by the auction controller.

93. (Original) The internet accessible electronic auction site of claim 92, wherein said one or more auction items are auctioned at the same time.

94. (Amended) An electronic auction system comprising:

    a. means for entering auction inventory items; and

    b. means for storing said auction inventory items; and

    c. means for reviewing said auction inventory items; and

    d. means for querying said auction inventory items to create selected auction inventory items satisfying selection criteria of a potential [buyer] bidder;

    e. means for entering a bid amount and a bid ranking <u>specified by a bidder</u> for one or more of said selected auction inventory items to create one or more bid entries;

    f. means for storing said bid entries;

    g. means for processing said bid entries to determine winning bids for said auction inventory items, said winning bids being based on both said bid amount and said bid ranking;

    <u>wherein a bidder can specify that a set of bids submitted by such bidder for a set of items in said auction inventory items should be processed as mutually exclusive;</u>

    h. means for transmitting a notification associated with said winning bids to one or more bidders.

95. (Amended) The system of claim 94, wherein bid entries for an auction item from any individual bidder consist of at least one unconditional bid.

96. (Amended) The system of claim 94, further comprising means for transmitting a notice to a bidder that their bid entries do not include a winning bid.

97. (Amended) The system of claim 94, further comprising a means for permitting a bidder who has been outbid for an auction item to increase a bid amount of a bid entry.

98. (Amended) The system of claim 94, further comprising a means for coordinating payment of any winning bids.

99. (Amended) The system of claim 94, further comprising a means for observing a status of any auctions.

100.   (Amended) The system of claim 94, further comprising a means to store user information.

101.   (Amended) The system of claim 94, further comprising a means to store vendor information.

102.   (Amended) The system of claim 94, further comprising a means to store and retrieve historical auction results.